

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ABSTRACT

REVENUE (ENDOWMENTS) DEPARTMENT – Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati - Report of Justice Sri M.Jagannadha Rao, Retired Judge, Supreme Court of India as a Single Member of Commission of Inquiry on Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati - Submitted - Recommendations – Accepted – Follow up action on the recommendations – Orders – ISSUED.

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REVENUE (VIG.IV.1) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Ms.No. 604

Dated the 29th of June, 2010.

Read the following:-

1. G.O.Rt.No.56, Revenue (Vig.IV) Deptt., dt.16.1.2009.
2. G.O.Rt.No.68, Revenue (Vig.IV) Deptt., dt.19.1.2009.
3. G.O.Rt.No.577, Revenue (Vig.IV) Deptt., dt.08.04.2009.
4. From Justice Sri M. Jagannadha Rao, Single Member of COI., Report-I, dt.7.10.2009.
5. From Justice Sri M. Jagannadha Rao, Single Member of COI., Report-II, dt.10.01.2010.

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ORDER:

In the reference 1st read above, Government have appointed Justice Sri M. Jagannadha Rao, Retired Judge, Supreme Court of India as a Single Member of Commission of Inquiry to inquire into all the matters relating to the arrangements to be made to safeguard the Jewellery and Valuables of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams with the following terms of Reference:-

- (i) to inquire into the probable causes and circumstances which led to shortage of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Gold Dollars in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams;
- (ii) the arrangements to be made for the security and safety of Jewellery and valuables belonging to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams; and
- (iii) to suggest systems and measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents in future.

2. In the references 4th and 5th read above, Justice Sri M. Jagannadha Rao, Retired Judge, Supreme Court of India, Single Member of Commission of Inquiry has submitted his Report to Government, in two parts.

3. In respect of the recommendations on terms of reference (i) above, the Government have already initiated disciplinary proceedings against the officials of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for misappropriation of 300 gold dollars and entrusted the case to Commission of Inquiries. The Government have therefore decided that no separate action is necessary on the recommendations of Justice Sri M.Jagannadha Rao, Single Member of Commission of Inquiry in respect of probable causes and circumstances which led to shortage of 300 gold dollars in Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.

4. Justice Sri M.Jagannadha Rao, Single Member for Commission of Inquiry has made the following recommendations with reference to the existing safeguards with regard to the Jewellery at Srivari Temple, Tirumala:-

(P.T.O.)

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) That the existing system of maintenance of the registers in respect of the Jewellery at the Srivari Temple, is by all accounts, a very good system which ensures the safety of Jewellery of the Deities at Srivari Temple, Tirumala;
 - a) That there is a Register called Samarpana Register which refers to the description of the item of Jewellery which is either taken out from the lockers or is restored back to the lockers every day, under signatures of the Deputy Executive Officer (T), Peishkar and the Bokkasam Clerk;
 - b) That there is a Register called the Kanukala Register which contains extensive details of the Jewellery donated at the Bokkasam in the Srivari Temple and it contains signatures of the Deputy Executive Officer (T), Peishkar and the Bokkasam Clerk for every such entry and it also contains the remarks of the appraisers who also sign therein; and that it contains cross-references to the Receipt Books from which a copy is given to the donor and also to the entries in the Padikavali Register and the Thiruvabharanam Registers.
 - c) That there is a Miscellaneous Receipt Book in one original and two carbon copies and one carbon copy is given by the Bokkasam Clerk to the donor, with details and the number of the receipt is entered in the Kanukula Register which contains all details;
 - d) That there are Thiruvabharanam Registers which are separately maintained for the Moolavarlu and the Utsava Moorthies containing details of the item donated, as accepted by the Executive Officer for retention in the Temple for adorning the Deities and that once the entry is made in this Register, corresponding entries are made in the Kanukala Register about its acceptance for adorning the Deities;
 - e) That there is a Padikavali Register maintained at the main entrance of the Temple and signed by the guards and the serial number given to any item of Jewellery in this Register is also carried forward into the Kanukula Register.
 - f) That all the Registers and receipt books maintained at the Bokkasam and at the Padikavali contain cross references to each other and are signed by the Senior Officers of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams
 - g) That the Commission is satisfied that there is a near perfect system of listing the Jewellery of the Deities of the Srivari Temple, including fresh donations of Jewellery.
- 2) (a) That, inside the main Srivari Temple is the first room after the Bangaru Vakali called Snapana Mandapam, on the left hand side there are seven Iron safes with several double locker boxes in each iron safe, with a master key and a second key, in all 72 locker keys; that each iron safe has a main door with a lock; that there is a grill door outside theses seven iron safes which has a lock.

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- i. That the master key of the lockers is with the Deputy Executive Officer (T) and the second key of each locker is with the Peishkar; and the key of the lock on the grill is in duplicate, one is with the Peishkar and the other is with the Bokkasam Clerk, and
 - ii. That, with a view to ensure further security, the second key of each locker has been changed in such a manner that any particular key bearing a number cannot open the corresponding locker bearing the same number and the correct numbers are only known to the Peishkar and the Bokkasam Clerk.
 - 3)** That thus, there is very sound and secure system at present in respect of the safety of all the Jewellery at Srivari Temple.
 - 4)** That the personal inspection by the Commission and its satisfaction will, it is hoped, set at rest all suspicions and rumours that have been floated recently in the public.
5. With reference to the terms of references (ii) and (iii) referred in para (1) above, Justice Sri M.Jagannadha Rao, Single Member for Commission of Inquiry has made the following recommendations:-

I. Srivari Hundi (Tirumala)

- (A)** Parakamani (Tirumala) in respect of gold/silver ornaments, currency notes, coins and other valuables and handing over of currency notes to the Banks at Tirumala;
- (B)** Parakamani Coins (Tirupati) in respect of Coins received from Parakamani, Tirumala;

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1)** In regard to the currency counted at Parakamani, Tirumala, and handed over to the officials of the Bank at Parakamani, entries must be made in the Padikavali Register whenever the boxes containing the currency are taken out of Srivari Temple by the Banks.
- 2)** So far as the foreign currency received from the Hundi and which is handed over to the Bank officials at Parakamani, Tirumala, it would be necessary for the Banks to send a statement of the foreign currency to the Financial Advisor and Chief Accounts Officer, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams and the Parakamani and also inform him about the foreign exchange rates applied in respect of the said currency and the final amount remitted to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams account.
- 3)** The Commission does not recommend valuation of the items retained in the Tiruvabharanam Registers as it serves no purpose and valuations go on changing everyday. Further, from the point of view of security of the property, it is not advisable to mention the value of the items.

Only valuation or current market rate for broken or lost parts of an item must be entered in the Register.

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II. Treasury, Tirupati

- (A) Treasury (Tirupati) in respect of gold and silver ornaments and other valuables received from Tirumala, Parakamani (Tirumala). Various functions of Treasury Department at Tirupati; and
- (B) Transport of gold ornaments etc. from Treasury to Mint at Mumbai and re-transport of gold bars, gold dollars and Mangalasutrams from Mumbai to the Treasury and security aspects in relation thereto.

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) So far as the items from the Hundies which are received by the Treasury, Tirupati, though the Parakamani, Tirumala, are concerned, (excluding gold ornaments, gold articles and gold on copper which are sent to the Mint at Mumbai), articles including pure gold, FMG, and 24 Ct., stones gold and stones are being kept in the Treasury in its strong room at Tirupati and these are remaining as dead capital.

However, in respect of stone gold items in the Treasury, once the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has expert qualified Appraisers and Gemologists from the Institutes at Jaipur and Mumbai and Gold Appraisers from the Mint at Mumbai, it would be possible to estimate the value of the stone gold items as such and they may be then put to auction once in one year in the presence of a retired High Court Judge, a retired Police Officer of the rank of DGP and a retired IAS Officer of the rank of Chief Secretary fixing an upset price, (which is based on the above valuation after obtaining the approval of the Jewellery Technical Advisory Committee of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams and the Executive Officer). The sale proceeds should be utilized only for purchase of gold bars. The said gold bars should then be deposited in Nationalized Banks to earn interest. The Commission specifically recommends that the sale proceeds should not be deposited in the cash accounts of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Rule 133 of the Rules can be amended for this purpose.

- 2) So far as the transport of gold ornaments, gold articles and copper on gold which are being sent by the Treasury at Tirupati to the Mint at Mumbai, the Commission was informed that the latest procedure is to transport them through a private Airlines which has agreed to carry them to Mumbai. The said Airlines has also agreed for the re-transport of gold bars, dollars and Mangalasutrams from the Mint, Mumbai to Tirupati. While this arrangement is better than the previous arrangements of carrying these items in A/c I and II compartments by train, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams must consult the Security Departments and Police authorities for ensuring the required security for these items which are being carried by the private Airlines.
- 3) Whenever, it becomes necessary to transport by road any of the items received at the Srivari Temple, (either at the Bokkasam or in the Hundies from the Temple) to the Parakamani, (Coins) Tirupati or the Treasury at Tirupati or to the air port such transport should not be done by using private vehicles but must be done through vehicles of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, with sufficient Police escort or through the well known agency like the "Trans Security". The same procedure should be applied for transport of Gold coins to the Treasury from the airport.

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III. Appraisal Systems and Gemology

Appraisal systems and Gemology in respect of gold and silver, gold and silver ornaments, diamonds, stones gold and other gems.

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) The Commission has referred to the role of Appraisers and Gemologists in the Bokkasam, Parakamani, Tirumala and Treasury at Tirupati. At present there are only departmental Appraisers who are not fully qualified to appraise the gold and silver items or the stones gold and stone items. They are only drawn from families of goldsmiths. They are no doubt doing good work based on their experience. It will, however, be necessary for the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams to empanel Appraisers and Gemologists from the Institutes at Jaipur and Mumbai and from the Mint at Mumbai and utilize their services for the purpose of appraisal and evaluating the nature and quality of various items of pure gold, FMG, and 24 Ct. stones gold and stones etc. The Commission has referred to the proposals of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for establishing a Gemology Institute. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams must hasten up and empanel qualified and experienced Appraisers and Gemologists. Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Appraisers can be sent for training to these Institutes. As stated earlier, there is no need to appraise the currency value of the Jewellery in the lockers of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams at Srivari Temple, Tirumala or at the temples at Thiruchanoor or Tirupati (This is subject to recommendations (4) below).
- 2) Simultaneously, along with such appraisal and evaluation of quality, entries should be made not only in the Registers, but also integrated into the computerized system proposed by ECIL, Hyderabad.
- 3) Such appraisal and evaluation of quality of all the items mentioned above should be done periodically at the annual verification or at least once every 2 (two) years.
- 4) It appears that some parts of some Jewellery or stones gold or stones fall down when they are used for adorning the Moolavar or the Utsava Moorthies and the broken items are preserved and entries are made in the Registers. Hitherto, whenever such parts are either lost or broken, evaluation is being done by the Departmental Appraisers. Once qualified persons are appointed, as stated above, the above job of evaluating the cost of the lost or broken items at market items must be entrusted to the above expert appraisers and entered in the Registers for a proper valuation.

IV. Proposals for introduction of Technology to safeguard the Jewellery.

The Commission has examined various proposals for the introduction of Technology to safeguard the Jewellery of Lord Venkateswara at Srivari Temple and made the following Recommendations:-

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

1. The Commission recommends that the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams should introduce modern technology for the purpose of security of the Jewellery of the Deities in all the temples under the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams or at any rate initially in its major temples.

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2. The Commission is of the opinion that introduction of hologram as well as RFID tags with alarm system and monitoring systems will be very useful for maintaining the security of the Jewels (vide proposals by the ECIL, Hyderabad in Annexure-I) (enclosed).
3. The Commission is also of the opinion that tracking systems could be also be introduced to locate where any particular item of Jewellery is actually located or has been moved to at any particular point of time (vide proposals of TAS Management India Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad Annexure-II) (enclosed).

V. Digital Photography and Video Imaging System

Digital Photography and Video Imaging System of items of Jewellery in the Tiruvabharanam Registers, Tirumala.

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) The Digital Photography and Video Imaging System recently introduced by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is quite good in as much as it gives the original description of the item as found in the Thiruvabharanam Registers along with the weight, caratage, and quality of the item and the type of stone and the number of stones contained in the item. However, this system must be integrated with the system proposed by the ECIL, Hyderabad. There is no need to give the current market value of the items.
- 2) The Digital Photography and Video Imaging System must be introduced in the Sree Padmavathi Ammavari Temple, Thiruchanoor, Sree Govindraja Swamy Temple at Tirupati and infact in all the Temples under the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams as early as possible.

VI. Physical Verification of Jewellery

Physical verification of Jewellery as per Thiruvabharanam Registers at Tirumala and Thiruchanoor by the Commission.

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) Physical verification system of all the items contain in the Thiruvabharanam Register must be done every year, without fail as contemplated by Rule 73 of the Rules framed under G.O.Ms.No.341, Revenue (Endowments-I) Department, dt. 9th August, 2000 and the amendments proposed in Resolution No.267 of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams dt.15.09.2009. Further, the details of any losses or broken pieces and their current value must be promptly incorporated in the Registers.
- 2) Another important aspect is that so far as the lockers in which the Jewellery is kept in the Srivari Temple and the Padmavathi Ammavari Temple and other Temples, the officers and priests are taking considerable time to locate the items in the lockers from their memory whenever any item is selected for verification from the Thiruvabharanam Registers. It is recommended that on the front side of the each locker, a paper should be pasted giving a list of the items contained in that locker and giving the number of the item in the Thiruvabharanam Register. Further, for each item inside the locker a tag can be put or the item can be put in a cloth cover, wherein the corresponding number in the Thiruvabharanam Registers is noted. This will save a lot of time at the time of verification.

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- 3) In the bunch of keys of the lockers, a tag can be put on the string containing each key so that it can be identified easily, notwithstanding the fact that the priests do not go by the number on the locker.
- 4) At Sri Padmavathi Ammavari Temple, a Padikavali Register should be introduced at the Mahadwaram.

VII. Sale of Dollars through Banks

Sale of dollars through the Andhra Bank (at Tirumala) and through the Syndicate Bank (at Tirupati and Tiruchanoor).

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) The Andhra Bank, at Tirumala Branch is following a well knit computerized network connecting its sales counter at Mahadwaram, Srivari Temple (where gold dollars are sold) and the Bank's branch at Tirumala. Daily Statements and monthly statements are sent by the Sales Counter to the Branch Office at Tirumala. The Commission recommends that copies of these statements must also be communicated to the Office of the Peishkar and to the Treasury at Tirupati.
- 2) The Syndicate Bank which is in charge of sale of dollars at Tirupati and Thiruchanoor is not having a computerized network connecting the Sales Counters and the Branches at Tirupati and Thiruchanoor respectively. On the model of the Andhra Bank at Tirumala, the Syndicate Bank must introduce "computerized network" so that the statements from the Sales Counter reach the Branches daily and that the monthly statements also reach the Branches and the Peishkar and the Treasury on the same day.
- 3) The Commission has noticed that there is no queue system at the Sales Counter at Mahadwaram, Tirumala, and the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams should introduce a queue system by planting the necessary metal rods on the front side of the Counter to compel the pilgrims to stand in queues. Similar systems, must be introduced at Tirupati and Thiruchanoor.
- 4) The Commission has been informed that there is no security personnel posted at the Sales Counter at Mahadwaram, Tirumala and on normal days as well as festival days, there is considerable inconvenience to the public and the danger of gold dollars being snatched away by miscreants, from the pilgrims or even from the Sales Counter. Adequate security personnel must be posted at the Sales Counter, Mahadwaram, Tirumala.
- 5) Transport of gold dollars is being done between the Sales Counter and the Banks branches and also as between the Treasury and Bank branches by private vehicles. This transport is unsafe and the Commission therefore recommends that the transport should be done through vehicles of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, with sufficient Police escort or through the well known agency like the "Trans Security".
- 6) With regard to the fixation of exchange rates for sale of dollars at the Sales Counters at Tirumala, Tirupati and Thiruchanoor and also the information centres at Chennai and Bangalore, as of now, the rate is supplied every Tuesday by the Peishkar and that rate is in force till the

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next Tuesday. In as much as there may be variations in the exchange rates every day, the Peishkar should communicate the rates every morning to the Banks and to the Sales Counters by fax or by e-mail, so that every day the sales can be made at the counter according to the exchange rate of that day.

- 7) Whenever dollars are dispatched from the Mint at Mumbai to the Treasury at Tirupati, the Mint should put dollars of different denominations in separate sealed boxes containing a particular uniform number of dollars (e.g. 50, 100 and so on) and the Treasury should send those boxes to the Sales Counter, so that when the sales are made at the sales counter by opening such sealed boxes, the purchasers would feel ensured that the dollars that are being sold have directly been dispatched by the Mint at Mumbai.

VIII.

Existing procedures for maintenance of Registers, responsibility of Officers and Archakas and proposal for New Jewellery Verification Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS:-

- 1) This being the most important as it deals with the functions of the Officers and Archakas in relation to the Jewellery of the Deities. Annual physical verification of the Jewellery must be held without fail and necessary additional staff must be employed without fail for this purpose.
- 2) Departmental action must be taken, if such annual physical verification is not done by the Officers.
- 3) The Archakas must also comply with the provisions of Rule 130 of the Rules published in G.O.Ms.No.311, Revenue (Endowments I) Department, dt.09.04.1990, without fail.

6. Government, after careful examination of the report in detail, have accepted the above recommendations of Justice Sri M. Jagannadha Rao, Retired Judge, Supreme Court of India/ Single Member of Commission of Inquiry.

7. The Executive Officer, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati, shall take necessary action for implementing the above recommendations of Justice Sri M.Jagannadha Rao, Single Member of Commission of Inquiry and intimate the result of Action Taken to the Government, for enabling the Government to place the same on the table of the House. A copy of the report of Justice Sri M.Jagannadha Rao, Single Member of Commission of Inquiry will be made available soon after placing the same on the Table of the House.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF ANDHRA PRADESH)

K.V. RAMANA CHARY
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Executive Officer, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati (w.e.)
(Annexures I & II).

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Copy to:

The Commissioner, Endowments Department, A.P., Hyderabad.

The General Administration (Cabinet) Department.

The P.S. to Spl. C.S. to C.M.

The P.S. to M(Endts.).

The P.S. to Chief Secretary to Government.

The P.S. to Prl.Secy.to Govt. (Endts.),

The Revenue (Endts.III) Deptt.

The File-5.

// FORWARDED :: BY ORDER //

SECTION OFFICER